

"This does not mean that the scientific observer ought to start with a mind free from preconceived ideas as to classification and sequences. If such a person existed, he would be able to make no observations at all. The student ought, on the contrary, to cherish all the hypotheses he can lay his hands on, however far-fetched they may seem. Indeed, he must be on his guard against being biased by authority. As an instrument for the discovery of new truth, the wildest suggestion of a crank or a fanatic, or the most casual conclusion of the practical man, may well prove more fertile than verified generalisations which have already yielded their full fruit. Almost any preconceived idea as to the connexion between phenomena will help the observer, if it is only sufficiently limited in its scope and definite in its expression to be capable of comparison with facts. What is dangerous is to have only a single hypothesis, for this inevitably biases the selection of facts, or nothing but far-reaching theories as to ultimate causes and general results, for these cannot be tested by any facts that a single student can unravel."\*

On "far-reaching theories as to ultimate causes and general results" they have waged war, in the name of scientific method, throughout the long years of their common effort. Their own point of view was not of this kind, and it was buttressed by and founded on the most laborious investigation, covering six years.

Of this investigation, he said, many years later that it covered

"certainly six years of good hunting<sup>5</sup>—of hunting of facts about the past in the ten or a dozen cities of the United Kingdom in which the Trade Union head offices were then situated, of hunting after the relations between these facts and the general course of law and history, and of hunting for the generalisations and the ideas that transformed the chaotic tangle into a philosophy. We found it a fascinating task, dry and fatiguing as it

came to be in patches—like all long tasks' It  
proved well worth  
doing, even for Trade Unionism alone, but in the  
process we got  
new light on all the rest of British history, and we  
learned a lot  
about other factors in social organisation, and  
about the changes  
in their relations one to another through which  
society itself is  
transformed—in short, about Socialism itself"  
They learned, through their investigation, they  
also taught  
The publication of *Trade Unionism* and of  
*Industrial Democracy*

*Democracy*, Preface to 1927 edition